

Feed the Future Innovation Lab **For Collaborative Research on Nutrition - Africa** **Harvard School of Public Health -** **Annual Report - Year 3**

Feed the Future Innovation Lab

For Collaborative Research on Global Nutrition

Annual Report **Harvard School of Public Health (HSPH)** **Year 3 (201-2013)** **Feed the Future Innovation Lab for Collaborative Research on** **Nutrition-Africa**

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Map or List of Countries Where Work is Being Conducted

Uganda

List of Program Partners

Makerere University, Uganda

Acronyms

BBNC	Bangalore Boston Nutrition Collaborative
FtF	Feed the Future
HSPH	Harvard School of Public Health
ME	Management Entity
NIL	Feed the Future Innovation Lab for Collaborative Research on Nutrition
UCCP	Uganda Community Connector Project

I) Executive Summary

In Year 3, Harvard School of Public Health (HSPH) strengthened its collaboration with Makerere University and broadened its research agenda in Uganda. HSPH research activities in Uganda are closely linked to evaluation of USAID's Uganda Community Connector Project (UCCP). During the project year, a panel study was initiated in northern and southwestern Uganda to evaluate the impact of UCCP on household livelihoods and maternal and child nutritional outcomes, and detailed planning began on a birth cohort study to study the mechanisms by which UCCP impacts these outcomes. Capacity-building efforts were integrated into research activities, with additional training opportunities for Ugandan students and researchers provided through the Bangalore Boston Nutrition Collaborative (BBNC) and at HSPH.

II) Program Activities and Highlights

HSPH, in collaboration with Makerere University and Tufts University, began implementation of the NIL Uganda Panel Study in rural districts of northern and southwestern Uganda, with completion of the study baseline and dissemination of key Feed the Future (FtF) indicators and early findings through meetings and symposia. Training and capacity building for Ugandan scientists were integrated into research activities in Uganda as well as provided through short courses internationally.

III) Key Accomplishments

The baseline for the Uganda Panel Study was completed during Year 3. Specific accomplishments included obtaining of institutional approvals; development and testing of data collection tools and an electronic data collection application; training of supervisors and field staff; sampling of households; rapid and timely collection of baseline data; data cleaning; and calculation and dissemination of key FtF indicators and additional indicators requested by UCCP. Early findings from the baseline have been disseminated to USAID, UCCP, district leaders and officials, and other stakeholders through meetings, a research symposium, and presentations and discussions in each participating district. Significant planning has also been done for the Uganda Birth Cohort Study, which is scheduled to begin in the coming project year.

IV) Research Program Overview and Structure

HSPH research studies in Uganda are linked to the evaluation of the UCCP. All research is conducted in close collaboration with Makerere University and the ME. Effort is made to include training and active involvement of junior staff in research activities to build capacity in research on agriculture, nutrition, and health linkages.

V) Research Project Reports

a) Research linked to evaluation of the UCCP

i) Uganda Panel Study

NIL's Uganda Panel Study, conducted as a collaborative effort among HPSH, Makerere University, and the ME, aims to evaluate the impact of UCCP on household livelihoods and maternal and child nutritional status. The panel study collects representative data from households in randomly-selected districts initiating UCCP activities at varying stages of UCCP's scaling-up plan, thereby creating a natural experiment for evaluating UCCP. Achievements during the project year included obtaining of institutional approvals; development and testing of data collection tools and an electronic data collection application; training of supervisors and field staff; sampling of households; rapid and timely collection of baseline data; data cleaning; and calculation and dissemination of key FtF

indicators and additional indicators requested by UCCP. Early findings from the baseline have been disseminated to USAID, UCCP, district leaders and officials, and other stakeholders through meetings, a research symposium in June 2013, and presentations and discussions in each participating district in August 2013. These findings are being prepared as scientific manuscripts to be submitted for publication in the peer-reviewed literature. Baseline implementation also yielded lessons learned on specific data collection modules and methods for electronic data collection that will inform future data collection.

ii) **Uganda Birth Cohort Study**

NIL's Uganda Birth Cohort Study, also a collaborative effort among HPSH, Makerere University, and the ME, will examine the effect of interventions that integrate nutrition, health, agriculture, and livelihoods on maternal and child nutritional outcomes. Compared with the panel study, the cohort study will use a wider range of nutritional outcomes including biochemical measures and specifically study exposure to UCCP, uptake of its interventions, and mechanisms by which these impact maternal and child nutritional status. Study protocol and tools are being finalized, and the study is scheduled to begin in the coming project year.

VI) **Associate Award Research Project Reports**

HSPH was not involved in Associate Awards in Africa.

VII) **Human and Institutional Capacity Development**

a) **Training by Country**

i) **Short-Term**

Christopher Duggan served as Program Director and faculty member for the Bangalore Boston Nutrition Collaborative (BBNC) short course on nutrition research methods in January 2013. This course was attended by trainees from Uganda and Nepal who were supported by NIL, among others. Trainees receive two weeks of intensive training on research methods in international nutrition from faculty drawn from Harvard University, St. John's Research Institute, and Tufts University.

One trainee, Mr. Julius Twinamasiko, from Makerere University, attended the Summer Session for Public Health Studies at HSPH in July-August 2013. He took four intensive courses on epidemiology, biostatistics, and health policy under mentorship from HPSH NIL faculty, complementing his prior training in agricultural economics and providing a strong foundation for future interdisciplinary research and study on agriculture, nutrition, and health linkages.

ii) **Long-Term**

HSPH did not have long-term trainees during the project year.

b) **Institutional Development**

i) **Description**

Supervisors and field staff involved in the panel study received training on agriculture, nutrition, and health linkages as well as key related areas such as sanitation and hygiene, infant and young child feeding practices, and intra-household gender dynamics prior to data collection. Practical training included the use of tablets for electronic data collection,

anthropometric assessment of adults and children, malaria diagnosis, and field assessment of anemia. Some panel study staff have continued engagement with NIL through attending the BBNC short course or the Summer Session for Public Health Studies at HSPH or by contributing to analyses of collected panel data. Dissemination of panel methods and findings to USAID, UCCP, and other stakeholders, students at Ugandan institutions, and leaders and officials in participating districts have also contributed to NIL's capacity-building objectives in Uganda.

ii) Partners

Partners in training and dissemination activities include Makerere University and Tufts University (ME).

VIII) Technology Transfer and Scaling Partnerships

NIL is not involved in technology development, transfer, or scaling.

IX) Governance and Management Entity Activity

Wafaie Fawzi continued his role on the Board of Directors, and Christopher Duggan continued his role on the Technical Advisory Committee during the project year.

X) Other Topics

None to report.

XI) Issues

None to report.

XII) Future Directions

HSPH will continue to expand its activities in Uganda in Year 4. Research will be conducted on agriculture, nutrition, and health linkages using panel data collected in Year 3. The multiyear Birth Cohort Study will begin, allowing detailed investigation of mechanisms by which integrated interventions impact maternal and child nutritional outcomes. Capacity building will continue to be integrated into research activities, while additional training opportunities will be offered through BBNC and at HSPH in Boston.